

NEWS RELEASE

**USDA Forest Service
Caribou-Targhee National Forest
1405 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REMINDER OF SPRING BEAR ACTIVITY

Caribou-Targhee National Forest Supervisor Larry Timchak reminds local residents and visitors to be alert for signs of bear activity on the Forest. This is the time of year when bears begin to emerge from their winter dens and appropriate precautions for traveling in bear country should be taken.

Historically, adult male bears emerge from hibernation as early as mid March. When bears come out of their winter dens, they begin to search for any food source that helps restore depleted fat reserves after hibernation. Winter-weakened animals and winter-killed wildlife carcasses provide an immediate source of protein and are vigorously defended by hungry bears. As snow banks recede, bears also dig up and eat burrowing rodents and spring wildflowers. Female bears, accompanied by their cubs, emerge later in the spring and are especially protective of their young. **Do not approach a bear under any circumstances.** This is particularly important for situations involving bears with cubs, or bears near a carcass.

When traveling in bear country, precautionary measures should include carrying bear spray (minimum of 7.9 ounces) and keeping it easily accessible to use. Take time to become familiar with the proper handling of pepper spray and remember that it is not a substitute for being alert and exercising good judgment and safety practices, such as making noise and traveling in a group - not alone – while in the backcountry. Use the spray only in the event of an attack.

Visitors should report grizzly bear sightings or signs to the nearest Forest Service or Idaho Fish and Game Offices as soon as possible. You may also file a report on the Forest web site at www.fs.fed.us/r4/caribou-targhee.

Forest Officials remind visitors to keep food, garbage and other odorous items unavailable to bears by storing attractants inside locked vehicles or bear resistant storage boxes and disposing of garbage in a bear-resistant trash can or dumpster. For further information on spring conditions on the Forest, please call a local ranger district or the Idaho Falls Visitor Center at 208-523-3278.